

PRESIDENT BARRETT'S ADDRESS

An Interesting Talk on the Work Now Being Accomplished by the National Commission.

To the Officers and Members of the Farmers' Union:

I have the honor to report to you the results thus far of the most remarkable and significant conference in the history of the Farmers' Union—the National legislative conference of officials and representatives that has been in progress the last few days in Washington City.

The conference was called by myself to consider specifically means to curb gambling in farm products of the nation, and many other measures of Congressional importance.

From the earliest days of this organization, we have been striving to expose and rout that element of gamblers using National crops as pawns in a game to beat down prices to the producer and demoralize business and trade conditions at large in this country. We also have been laboring to secure other measures, such as the Parcels Post and many others of interest, to cut membership.

We have long recognized that to insure victory it would be essential to bring pressure upon Congress, pressure of such an order that the Representatives and Senators would realize our determination and busy themselves in co-operating with us towards the materializing of many important laws—this report is intended to show you the receptive attitude of our law makers.

The conference of the last few days has achieved signal success along these lines.

Congress is awakened to the power and the determination of the Farmers' Union as never before in my recollection.

Republicans and Democrats, Senators and Representatives, from East and West and North and South, they crowded into our meeting. Frequently, as you will see by the subjoined Minutes, whole State delegations attended in a body, other State delegations were represented and still others adopted ringing resolutions favoring the crusade of the Farmers' Union and pledging their utmost aid in making them effectual.

At the outset, I want to give full credit to the devotion and the energy of your committee to assist me in the work of this conference. To a man, they were on duty night and day, frequently laboring until the small hours of the morning in the prosecution of the details assigned them. Without hesitation or intermission they approached Congressmen, ascertained their positions on reform legislation and urged their attendance at our sessions. Not a man lagged; all of them were faithful, industrious, willing and eager to be of the greatest possible assistance.

As a consequence of their endeavors we are gradually lining up the Congress of this country, committing them by word of mouth and by public expression, separating the sheep from the goats and paving the way for such legislative results as no farmers organization has ever attained.

In this connection, I should in justice say that there are Congressmen who will work sincerely

for the farmer of their own free will and inclination, with never a thought of doing so in order to keep their political fences straight. This class would really accomplish much more than it does, had not the farmer in the past been indifferent or slow to undertake to separate the true friend from the friend for revenue only.

Brethren of the Farmers' Union, the main thing I want to impress upon you as a result of this conference is that Congress is thoroughly receptive to the demands and rights of our organization. In every session of the conference, many of the most influential members of both parties and each house, formally, and in unqualified language, admitted the strength of this organization, declaring they would be afraid to offer for re-election if they had not made a sincere effort to procure such legislation as would justly advance the interests of the union and agricultural interests generally.

I want to say further to you that, in the furtherance of the campaign against gambling in agricultural products, Parcels Post, and other national measures, a tremendously effectual method is for you to approach your representatives and senators personally and by letter.

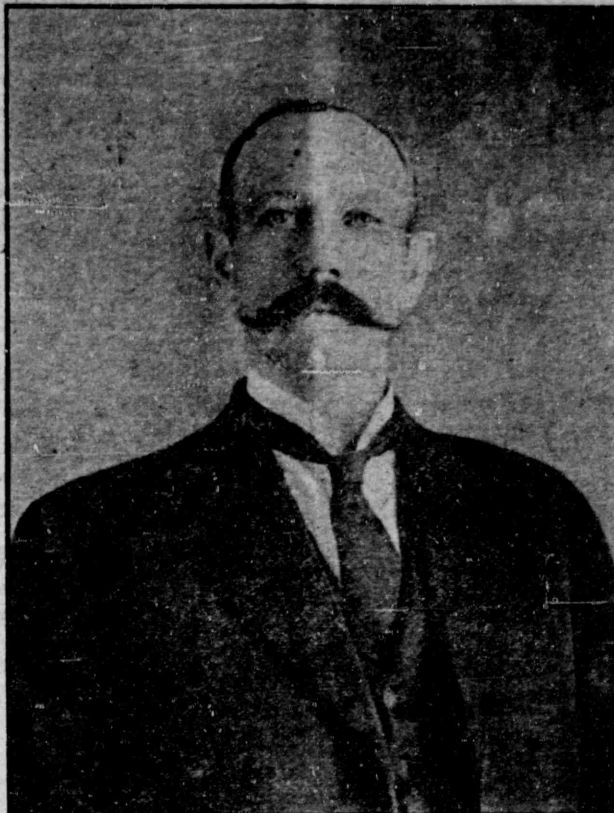
Write them at Washington, representing the platform of the union with regard to National legislation against these and other crying evils, and demanding such action as will promote success consistent with equity to us and the country-at-large.

I regard our chances to obtain results as most excellent. On February 9th, we will appear before the House Committee on Agriculture to speak in favor of the anti-option bills, and to urge the enactment of such legislation as will protect our members and the farmer generally against the criminal extortions of the men who toil not, nor spin, but fatten on the toil of the husbandmen.

You can aid this fight, individually and as officers. Make your attitude plainly known to your Congressman. The humblest member has more influence than he realizes in a matter of this nature. I have had this matter impressed upon me recently as never before in my experience with the organization. Congressmen respect organization; especially do they respect our organization, for they have felt its weight in their home districts, and they appreciate the fact that we are rapidly attaining such national dimensions as will force every man-jack of them to a rigid accounting, sooner or later.

Another thing: We have gone to much labor and considerable expense to prepare these Minutes for your inspection. These Minutes are a faithful transcript of the way in which we kept tab on Congressmen and officials generally at Washington. Read them, every line. You will gain more knowledge of the nature and prospects of the fight before us, and more information as to how to make it a successful one, by studying this report of the battle at close range than by

Kentucky's Two Members of the Commission



HON. JOHN GRADY



HON. M. B. TAPP

years of desultory reading or listening to the speeches of professing politicians.

I do not maintain that the enemy is not represented at Washington, and that the enemy did not make efforts to secure admission to our conference. On several occasions outright or disguised agents and workers of exchanges made efforts to get into our counsels, and sought information on the outside, of our members. These people are awake to their peril. They know from the organized efforts of the Farmers' Union that the doom of gambling in the products of the people is sounded, and they are making frantic efforts to stave off defeat.

This they cannot effect. The utmost they can accomplish is to delay their own extermination, although I have a good reason to hope that even to this extent they will be disappointed.

In the future, the task of crushing the rights of the farmer and of defending the vampires that seek his life's blood will grow increasingly difficult. We will not scourge the temple of all abuses today or tomorrow, but our early success is written.

Let me tell you a little incident which illustrates the whole matter: One of the most prominent Representatives on the Democratic side of the House, a leader in National legislation, and one

of the most respected by leaders of both parties, openly stated at one of our sessions that members of Congress might as well cease trying to fool themselves or the public as to their motives in supporting the Farmers' Union. "Frankly," he said, "I am afraid of the Farmers' Union. I know its strength, and I simply realize that if I want to return to Washington it is incumbent on me to pledge myself and to keep faith in the reformative crusade of this organization."

Numberless other Congressmen expressed themselves in the same vein. We let them know we were there for business. That independent attitude had its effect.

The picture at the head of this report shows you your representatives at the conference. We had half an hour's conversation with President Taft, and I believe his attitude is favorable.

However, we are not depending upon any one individual, however powerful, in this war. We are depending upon ourselves, upon the smallest and humblest, as well as the highest and most learned, members of this organization. We are depending upon the proved power of cohesive organization to attain its end, when this end does not conflict with equity, justice and the Golden Rule.

(Continued on last page.)

MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE

Of Farmers' Union Officials Held in the National Hotel, Washington, D. C. Beginning Jan. 7, 1910.

The National Officials of the Farmers' Union, together with a number of brethren who had been selected by several of the States to assist in securing legislation, by Congress that would be of great benefit to the farmers of this country, met in the National Hotel at 9 a. m.

Present were: C. S. Barrett, President; W. A. Morris, O. F. Dornblaser, A. C. Shuford, S. L. Wilson, members of the board of directors; Alex Davis, Assistant National Secretary; J. J. Robinson, Jr., Chairman of the Executive Committee of Alabama; and W. W. Meyers, President of the Indiana State Union.

After a general discussion in which it was agreed that all work undertaken here by the conference should be done in a systematic manner, the conference adjourned until 4:30 p. m.

President Barrett opened deliberations with a brief talk strongly outlining the purpose of the conference and the methods essential to prosecuting it to a successful conclusion.

"We are here to watch Congress, to find out our friends and enemies and to compel action," he said. "But, in order to do these things, we must watch ourselves, not spare ourselves, mind or body each man giving as complete attention and as intelligent devotion to the work as though his life depended on the result."

"Realize, brethren, that it is a tremendous stake for which we are working—the elimination of those criminal abuses that reach down into your pockets, that deprive your wives and your children, and the wives and children of the 3,000,000 members you represent, of the just reward of their labors."

"Keep that fact ever in mind while on the firing line. The Farmers' Union has already fought and won many great battles. The one now confronting us is of vast importance to the present and future, and it is not yet won. Victory will come only through consecrated and constant labor, fearless facing of the enemies of the farmer, making conversion where it is possible, showing no quarter where it is not possible. Find out, too, the false friends of this organization—the men who promise glibly, smile pleasantly, but fail to live up to their pledges when the time for action arrives."

The welfare of the farming interests of this country is now, very largely, in our hands. Let us not hesitate to lose sleep and rest, to sacrifice ourselves to the limit for the men and the women and the children on the farms of this country. If we would rid them of the terrific weight of gambling in the products of their toil, we must first display obedience to orders, implicit and unquestioning, harmony among ourselves, incessant labor and refuse to be diverted from our righteous mission. If we religiously observe these rules, delay or failure cannot be laid at our doors. We hold a commission from the producers of this country; let us discharge it as a sacred, God-given trust."

Following this address, the

members enthusiastically agreed to its sentiments and reached an understanding that all the work of the conference should proceed along the systematic lines advanced by President Barrett. The conference then adjourned until 4:30 p. m.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The roll call showed in addition to those present in the morning session, brother T. J. Brooks of Tennessee.

Considerable discussion was indulged in with reference to the best course to pursue in pressing our claims upon the Congress for the abolition of gambling in farm products by the exchanges, which resulted in the selection of T. J. Brooks to represent us before the Committee on Agriculture, to whom all bills seeking this result have been referred.

Brother Shuford was appointed to take full charge of the Parcels Post matter, and to press our claims for the enactment of a comprehensive law on this subject before the committee to which the matter may be referred.

An adjournment was taken until 9 a. m., January 28th.

MORNING SESSION—JANUARY 28.

The conference met pursuant to adjournment.

The roll call showed all members present, and in addition thereto Brother Ben F. Ward, editor of the "Official Organ of Mississippi," M. B. Tapp, Secretary of the Executive Committee of Kentucky; and John Grady, member of the Board of Directors.

After discussing in detail the controversy between the Mississippi State Union and the Post Office Department, with reference to their official organ, President Barrett appointed brothers Ward and Shuford as a committee to present the matter to the Post Office Department.

The conference agreed, upon a motion of O. F. Dornblaser, that a correct record should be kept of the acts of the union men while in Washington, and of the attitude assumed by the members of Congress in regard to measures we are advocating, such records to be given publicity at the proper time.

After agreeing to visit the Capitol in a body, the conference adjourned until 6 p. m.

EVENING SESSION.

Brother Brooks reported that the Committee on Agriculture have agreed to begin the hearings on the anti-option bills, February 9th, and each member was requested to invite Congressmen and Senators from his State to attend these hearings.

It was agreed that we invite the members of Congress to meet with us to-morrow evening at 7 o'clock.

Upon the invitation of Brother Ward, Hon. Wm. A. Dickson of Mississippi appeared and assured us that he would render all the assistance possible to secure the regulations of the Exchanges.

Adjourned until 8:30 a. m., Saturday.

(Continued on 2nd page.)